The Builder.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1852.

R. WELBY PUGIN was buried in the church he has founded at Ramsgate, St. Augustine's, on Tuesday last. Part of the service was performed on Monday evening, with all the ceremonials of the Romish Church, and in the morning his body was placed in a vault beneath the south transept. Besides the members of his family and the priesthood, Sir Charles Barry, R.A.; Mr. Herbert, R.A.; Mr. T. Bury, Mr. Hardeman, Mr. Crace, Mr. Myers, Mr. Scott Murray, Mr. Knill, the father of Mrs. Pugin, and some other friends, took part in the ceremony. The crowd of strangers in the church in the morning was very great, and the mourners we have named, who carried candles, must have found the pressure for two hours a serious infliction.

The church, which the deceased architect has raised "for the benefit of the faithful residing in Ramsgate, and of the foreign seamen using the harbour," consists of a nave, chancel, tower, Lady chapel, and south transept,—the tower separating the nave and chancel. From the east end of the church, northward, extend a sacristy and school, with bell-turret. Farther east is a pile of dwelling-houses, partaking of the same character; and at the west end stands what was his own residence, the whole forming a large group at the extremity of the West Cliff, the termination of the town, very prominent on entering the harbour. The church and school, externally, are of flint, with plain bands of Whitby stone at short intervals. The tower is carried up ready to receive the spire, and upon it is erected a lofty wooden cradling, or crow's nest, visible a considerable distance at sea. The style throughout is Decorated, and externally the buildings are scarcely remarkable for anything beyond propriety: this itself, however, is not a small thing. The residence is of brick, with a battlemented tower, somewhat prosaic, and wholly without pretence. The pile of dwelling-houses at the east end are large and lofty, with overwhelming roofs (containing two floors), and battlemented chimney-shafts, and completely swamp the church.

Internally the church is wholly of stone, and displays some beautiful detail: the walls are substantial, and give that breadth of reveal in the openings which is so necessary for the proper character of Gothic architecture. The font, with lofty carved canopy, apparently the same that was in the Mediæval Court at the Great Exhibition, the rood screen, altar, stalls, canopied niches, lamps, &c. display the great skill in drawing for which he was justly celebrated. The windows have hood-moulds internally, with carved terminations, and are partially filled with stained glass. Above the windows, small glazed openings throughout the church give the means of ventilation. The south transept was the founder's chapel, and beneath it, a practice we are hoping to see abandoned, rest the remains of one whose too brief life has been full of strange events and strong excitement.

In early life unsettled and wandering, unstable and perplexed, rendering his parents unhappy with the fear that he "would not settle to anything," he has executed an amount of work which must seem little short of marvellous to those who do not know how much may be done by complete knowledge continuously applied, and has achieved a reputation which will outlast the recollection of his weaknesses and shortcomings. But he overdid it: traded upon his capital instead of the interest of it, and, as a matter of course, came too soon to an end. Although little more than forty years old when he died, he had been married three times, and leaves, with seven other children, a married daughter twenty-two years old. There are few men of whom more contradictory opinions may be obtained. "There is nothing worth living for," we heard him say some years ago, "but Christian Architecture and a boat." These absorbed him. He mixed, therefore, but little in society, made few friends, and the result is, as in many other cases, that those few with whom he was intimate saw only good in him. Our own vanity helps us to think well of one who is friendly with us, while he scoffs at all the world. While on the one side, therefore, we hear of his intolerance, want of respect for the feelings of others, and disregard of Professional courtesies, we find some who can speak only of his ability and his goodness. While a dozen comment on the wholesale abuse he lavished on his brother architects in his "Contrasts," which, nevertheless, did much good, one reminds us how that when a Spanish vessel came ashore with sailors suffering with fever, Pugin took them to his home, and kept them there till they were well. "He gave nothing to our charities," says a member of his own persuasion; but then replies another, he boarded his means, and spent them all in one great charity!

Of his change of religion (about 1834) we need say nothing. His father was a Romanist, his mother a Protestant, and his early predilections were at all events divided. He was led by the zeal of a convert to display intolerance, for which, it seems probable, he afterwards felt regret. This, however, is a point to which we shall refer but slightly.

Our readers are aware of the sad state of mind into which he fell; and will remember the remarks we were impelled to make on finding that he had been placed in Bethlehem. The manner in which those remarks were met, ostensibly by a member of his family, was neither wise nor honest, and might have provoked us to a reply which would not have been agreeable. Satisfied, however, with the correctness of all we had stated, and unwilling to give pain at such a moment, we remained silent under the reprehension, largely circulated through the newspapers, that we had interfered improperly. The article, however, had the effect intended, and our reward was very complete. Mr. Pugin was immediately removed to private care, and if we are rightly informed, a pension was immediately granted him, on the Civil List.

In appearance he became so much better, that he returned to his home, and it was there that he had an epileptic fit, which terminated his life. Assertions have been made, that the treatment adopted hastened the end, but there seem to be no grounds for them. Epilepsy, like hydrophobia, is an opprobrium to the medical profession. They cannot reach it.

Mr. Pugin did much for the correct revival of Gothic architecture. In his lectures on "The Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture," he had the merit of setting forth prominently and forcibly two great rules for design; 1st, that there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety; and, 2ndly, that all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building. He maintained that the external and internal appearance of an edifice should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is destined, and he denounced in unmeasured terms the puerilities, abominations, and deceits of the Gothic imitators of that day. Speaking of houses built in what is called the castellated style, he says,—"What absurdities, what anomalies, what utter contradictions do not the builders of modern castles perpetrate! How many portcullises which will not lower down, and drawbridges which will not draw up! How many loop-holes in turrets so small that the most diminutive sweep could not ascend them! On one side of the house machicolated parapets, embrasures, bastions, and all the show of strong defence, and round the corner of the building a conservatory leading to the principal rooms, through which a whole company of horsemen might penetrate at one smash into the very heart of the mansion! for who would hammer against nailed portals when he could kick his way through the greenhouse?" In such castles we have donjons which are drawing-rooms, watch-towers where the house-maids roost, and a bastion in which the butler cleans his plate!"

A notice of the deceased architect would be incomplete if it contained no reference to the builder who has carried out the greater number of his works, Mr. Myers. Twenty-five years ago, when Mr. Myers worked in Beverley Minster, he made a scaffold for Pugin, who was drawing there. Some time afterwards, hearing the latter was about to build a church at Derby, and recognising the name, Myers tendered for it, was accepted, and forthwith obtained the confidence of the architect, so that he never afterwards allowed any other person to be employed to carry out his works. Myers built for him no less than thirty-six churches. By a curious coincidence, the last drawing that Mr. Pugin completed for Myers' use was for Beverley Minster, and this was made on the very night, in February last, that he was taken to the private asylum at Kensington.

He was stopping at the Golden Cross, and had spent the whole day in visiting the London churches and public buildings.* At night he became much excited, and attacked Myers, but was ultimately calmed, and the latter, in order to retain his attention, reproached him for keeping the scaffolding up at Beverley, as they were waiting for drawings. "Give me a pencil," said Pugin, and on the back of a large envelop he designed an elegant vane, clear and precise, which has since been placed on the corner pinnacle of St. Mary's, at Beverley.

We might write much more, indeed had written more, but prefer to substitute for it a connected account of his professional career from the pen of an intimate friend of long standing. It is written with the partiality of a friend, but we are not disposed to qualify it.

* His impression during the whole of the day was, we are told, that he was effecting the union of the Roman and the Anglican church.

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